



# CATAWBA COUNTY

3070 11th Ave. Dr. SE - Hickory, NC 28602 - (828) 695-5800 - Fax (828) 695-4410 - TDD (828) 695-5155

Public Health

## **February is American Heart Month**

Since 1963, February has been declared American Heart Month to raise awareness of heart disease as the number one killer in America. Did you know heart disease is also the number one killer among American women? According to the American Heart Association, women account for 52.8% of the total heart disease deaths and are 4 to 6 times more likely to die of heart disease than of breast cancer. Everyone is encouraged to wear red on February 6<sup>th</sup> for *Go Red for Women* as part of the American Heart Association's nationwide movement. It is a nationwide movement that "celebrates the energy, passion, and power women have to band together and wipe out heart disease."

The good news is that heart disease is preventable by establishing healthy lifestyle changes.

### **Do you know the signs and symptoms of a heart attack?**

- **Chest discomfort.** Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or that goes away and comes back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.
- **Discomfort in other areas of the upper body.** Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.
- **Shortness of breath** with or without chest discomfort.
- **Other signs** may include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness

### **Know Your Risk Factors!**

Risk factors for heart disease include:

- Smoking
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol level
- High blood glucose
- Diabetic
- Overweight
- Lack of physical exercise
- High fat diet
- Family history

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## Some ways to reduce your risk:

- **Know your numbers!** Have your cholesterol, glucose, and blood pressure checked.

### **Healthy Numbers:**

- **Cholesterol:** Under 200mg
  - **LDL ("Bad" cholesterol):** less than 100mg
  - **HDL ("Good" cholesterol):** greater than 50mg
  - **Optimal blood pressure:** 120/80mmHg
  - **Healthy blood glucose:** less than 100mg/dl
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- **Don't smoke.** Avoid secondhand smoke too!
  - **Maintain a healthy weight.** Extra weight puts strain on your heart and arteries.
  - **Exercise regularly.** Your heart is a muscle and needs exercise too!
    - Exercise at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity on most days of the week such as, taking a brisk walk.
  - **Eat a low fat diet.**
    - Avoid foods that are high in saturated fat.
    - Choose lean meats and poultry.
    - Remove skin and visible fats from meats before cooking.
    - Grill, bake or broil meats and poultry.
    - Choose white meat most often when eating poultry.
  - **Be aware of chest pain.** Tell your doctor if you experience pain in your chest, shoulder, neck or jaw.
  - **Know your family history.**

**To learn more visit:**

**[www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org) or [www.womensheart.org](http://www.womensheart.org)**



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